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AUTHOR	White, Stephen; Johanson, Raymond
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ABSTRACT

The Index of Least Restrictive Employment is a vocational assessment instrument for use with individuals with disabilities. It focuses on job security, opportunity for advancement, job satisfaction, planning, earnings, and integration aspects of transition. The index is intended to provide a means of measuring the movement from more to less restrictive employment and training settings. (DB)

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INDEX OF LEAST RESTRICTIVE EMPLOYMENT

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An Assessment of The Critical Dimensions in The Transition Process

By
Stephen White
&
Raymond Johanson

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The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Gary Meers, Dr. Joseph Callahan, Brent Cresswell, and Hugh Smith in the conceptual development of this instrument. We would also like to gratefully acknowledge the painstaking efforts of Larry Galli for his assistance in our initial field test effort.

INTRODUCTION

A review of commercially available vocational assessment instruments illustrates a traditional emphasis on interest inventories, manipulative work samples, academic and cognitive abilities, and a recent focus on personality, social and survival skills. Little in vocational assessment has been published or disseminated in recent years which addresses quality of life issues. As a result, service providers have few instruments which assist them in determining the appropriateness of an individual's employment program. This is critical at the secondary level, where segmented scheduling presents frequent opportunities for programmatic decisions.

The Index of Least Restrictive Employment is an attempt to address these shortcomings. Its focus on job security, opportunity for advancement, job satisfaction, planning, earnings and integration aspects of transition provide professionals an easily administered tool which attends to the transition and employment concerns of all workers in a free society. It provides a means to measure the movement from more to less restrictive employment and training settings, and it includes an age-appropriate measure for students as they prepare to exit the public schools.

The Index will assist IEP team members in providing a measurable and relevant tool for evaluating the quality of a student's vocational program and a measure of the student's progress toward least restrictive environments during the transition from school to work and adulthood.

Each separate item, index, and total index score have been developed to yield a score of 1.0 if the student is on target. A score below 1.0 on a specific item or the entire index indicates a need for improvement or program modification. A score above 1.0 indicates that the placement exceeds a level normally considered least restrictive.

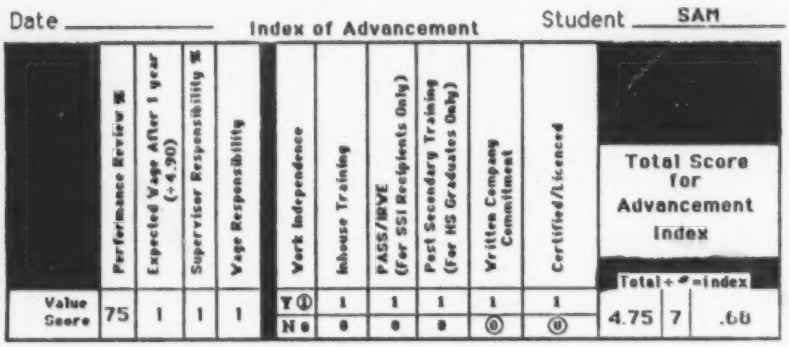
The complex nature of vocational training, employment, and transition will seldom produce an index with responses to each item and, for that reason, index scores are derived by averaging the items actually scored. If less than 50% of the items are scored, a need for greater investigation in this area is warranted. It is hoped that this instrument will be a useful and summative addition to your vocational assessment program. This is the first edition of the index and your assistance in returning a completed questionnaire attached to the Index will assist us in refining it to better meet your needs. Thank you.

Directions

Determine the value score for each of the five indicators listed on pages 6-9. Refer to the definitions for instructions on how to derive scores for each item. Determine the total score for each index area by adding all of the value scores and dividing by the total number of indicators used. Change all percentages to **DECIMALS** before scoring. Totals from all index areas divided by the number of categories scored produces an Index of Least Restrictive Employment. Score as many items as possible, and disregard items only when information is unavailable.

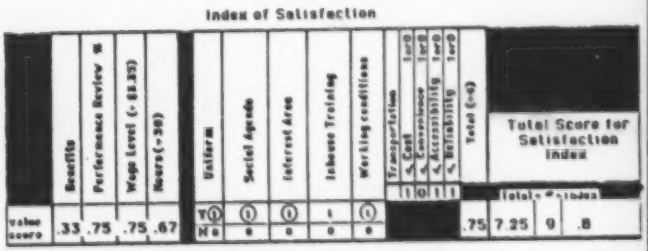
Example:

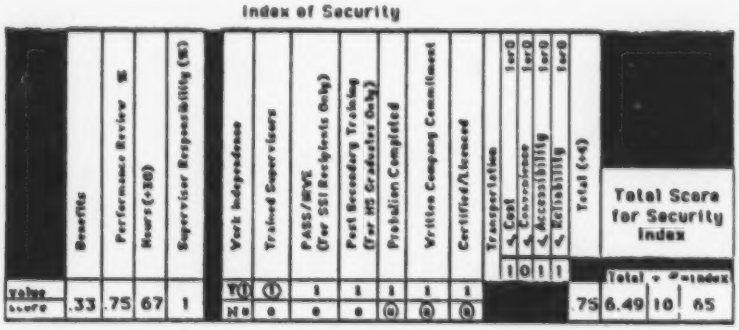
Sam is a 21 year old moderately retarded man in his last year of public school. He attends a self-contained special education program until 12:15 p.m. when he finishes lunch. At 12:20 he rides public transit (25 cents) to the Community Center where he cleans the bleachers, gym floor and restrooms until 4:30. Sam has been employed for two months. His supervisor and coworkers have received training to facilitate an independent work environment. The company does not have a written plan for hiring disabled people. He works alone at subminimum wage ($2.50). However, at 2:30 he has coffee break with three other custodians where they talk about upcoming company social events. Of three fringe benefits he receives only paid vacation. His last performance review averaged to 75% of normal performance, though he has shown progress and is expected to be at minimum wage ($3.35) within three months and expected to be eligible for a total of $2.40 in raises within the next 12 months. After work Sam must wait 45 minutes for the transit bus to get home. He feels it's worth the wait since cleaning up and wearing a uniform have always been of interest to him.



Note that Sam had a .75 perfomance review, is expected to earn $4.90 (poverty level wages) within one year, is supervised onsite by Community Center staff who are also responsible for his wages, and works independently. There is no written company commitment and the reader should be able to infer that certification is not required. However, there is not enough information to respond to Inhouse Training or PASS/IRWE. Post-secondary training is not applicable since Sam is still in school. To find Sam's Index of Advancement, divide his score of 4.75 by the number of responses (7) = .68.

Sam receives one benefit of 3 for a score of .33, a .75 performance review, and a wage score of .75 ($2.50 ÷ 3.35). Twenty hours ÷ 30 = .67. He wears a uniform, is involved in company sponsored social events, and is working in his interest area. One should infer that working conditions are good. However, the 45 minute wait for the home bound bus gives a 0 Convenience Score for a total Transportation Score of .75. This yields an Index of Satisfaction Score of .8 (7.25 ÷ 9, not enough information to determine Inhouse Training Score).





Benefits, performance reviews, hours, and supervisor responsibility have been determined earlier. Sam has worked less than three months giving a score of 0 under Probation Period, his supervisor is trained, and he works alone for a score of 1 each. As before, there is not enough information to determine PASS/IRWE or Post Secondary Training. Transportation score remains at .75 and the job does not require certification. Index total of 6.49 ÷ 10 = .65.

Sam's placement is competitive, even though his wage is subminimum. One should infer he is on follow-up for an integration score of 1.0. He works with others (1.0), has coffee break regularly with non-disabled (1.0), and 20 hours (÷ 30 = .67). Age appropriateness score is 12 ÷ 12 = 1. (Though he earns subminimum wages, his job is considered competitive because wages are based on performance, he is not supported and the likelihood of long-range pay increases and job tenure is good.) Wage levels remain .75 and 1.0 as before for a total of 7.42 ÷ 8 = .93

INDEX OF EMPLOYMENT

INTEGRATION											+																								=	
Placement								Integration			Social Conditions			Interaction			Hours		Age-Appropriateness							Wages		Wages		INDEX OF EMPLOYMENT					
Unpaid School	Unpaid Community	Subminimum School	Special Vocation Education	Community Training	Supported Subminimum	Supported ($3.35+)	Competitive Jobs	Segregated	Public Crew	Enclave	Distributive Job Coach	Job Coach + Trained Supv	Follow-up/Independent	Works with others		No interaction	Only with disabled	Infrequently w/ nondisabled	Regularly w/ nondisabled		÷ 30	Unpaid School													
																							Unpaid Community													
																							Subminimum School													
																							Special Voc Education													
																							Community Training													
																							Supported Subminimum													
																							Supported ($3.35+)													
																							Competitive Jobs													
																							Determine Age-Appropriateness													
.2	.3	.4	.6	.7	1.0	.0	.2	.5	.6	.9	1.0	yes	1	.0	.2	.4	1.0	.67	.75	Grade Appropriateness / Actual Grade							1.33								
												no	0																								

SCORE: 12 ÷ 12 = 1 | Wage level = $3.35 | Expected Wage After 1 yr. (= $4.50) | 7.42 ÷ 8 = .93

Index of Long Range IEP Planning

	1. Assessments used to develop objectives?	2. Planning includes current vocational assessment data?	3. Planning includes long-range Career Goal?	4. Least restrictive environment considered for each objective?	5. Planning includes nonacademic goals?	6. Annual objectives relate to long range goals?	7. Planning includes life skill goals?	8. Planning includes social-behavior goals?	9. Timelines specified for annual/short term objectives?	10. Adult services rep present at planning meeting?	Total Score for Long Range Planning (Total ÷ 10)
Yes	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	1	9 ÷ 10 = .9
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(0)	

On the long-range planning index all dimensions were affirmative with one exception, no adult service representative was present at his IEP meeting.

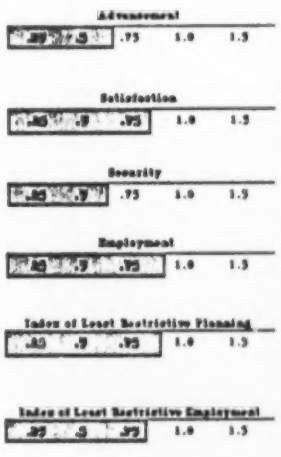
Sam's Index of Least Restrictive Employment reveals problem areas in Advancement and Security. Item analysis indicates the following deficit areas: benefits, hours, written company commitment, and licensed skills. Further investigation, however, revealed that Sam's hours and benefits were contingent on completion of his 3 months probation and he is expected to complete that successfully. Effort to secure a written affirmative action plan may be warranted not only for Sam, but for future special needs workers. Sam's Index of Least Restrictive Employment also illustrates adequate planning, integrated employment, and a reasonable expectation for competitive wage increases. It is unlikely that Sam will ever need to complete a licensing examination for his position, but this deficit may impact his long-term marketability with other businesses.

Student SAM Date _____

These continuums are available to provide easy reference for each value. Plot each value on the appropriate continuum.

Most Restrictive Placement — Least Restrictive Placement

Index of Advancement	.68
Index of Satisfaction	.8
Index of Security	.65
Index of Employment	.93
Index of Planning	.9
Total Score	3.96
Total score ÷ 5 = Index of Least Restrictive Employment	.79



Indices of Job Security, Advancement, and Satisfaction

These indices assume that job security, advancement, and satisfaction are critical to successful employment. Use the following definitions when determining values for each index. If you are unable to clearly determine a score, leave the item blank. Change all percentages to decimals (100%=1.0, 90%=.9).

•**Benefits:** Does the position offer a benefit package? Determine the number of benefits received by the employee. Divide by the number of benefits available from the employer. The quotient is the Benefits Value. Examples are sick leave, vacation, dental, health, vision, savings plans.

•**Expected Wage**: Divide the employee's expected (after 1 yr.) wage by $4.90 (poverty threshold) to derive an expected wage score.

•**Hours**: Divide employee's hours per week by 30 to derive score. (30 hours worked + 30 = 1; 10 hours worked+30=.33; 40 hours worked + 30 =1.33)

•**Performance Review**: Find the score required for Average Worksite Performance from the employee evaluation form used at the worksite and divide the actual performance by this average.

•**Supervisor Responsibility**: Determine the percent of supervision supplied by company as opposed to the amount of supervision supplied by outside support agencies(i.e job coaches).

•**Transportation**: Transportation is broken down into 4 catagories listed below. Give each a value of 1 for yes and a value of 0 for no.

Cost: Does the employee spend 15% or less of gross income on transportation?

Convenience: Is transportation free of difficulty and/or discomfort as rated by the employee.

Accessibility: Is transportation easily approached?

Reliability: Is transportation there when needed?

Divide the total by 4. (0+4=0; 1+4= .25; 2+4=.5; 3+4 =.75; 4 + 4=1)

•**Wage Level**: Divide the employee's hourly wage by 3.35 (minimum) to derive a wage level value. ($3.35+3.35=1; $4.50+3.35=1.34; $2.00+3.35 =.59)

•**Wage Responsibility**: What percentage of the employee's wage is paid by the employer?

The following questions are given a value of 1 if answered yes and a value of 0 if answered no.

•**Certified/License**: Does the employee hold any certificates or licenses related to employment?

•**Inhouse Training**: Does the position make available to employees additional training at company expense?

•**Interest Area**: Is the position concurrent with the employee's interest surveys, comments, etc.?

•**PASS/IRWE**: (For adult SSI recipients only) Does the client have a written Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS) or an Impairment Related Work Expense(IRWE) plan? Contact your local Social Security Administration for further details.

•**Post Secondary Training**: (For Graduates Only) Does the client have any postsecondary training (college, vocational-technical school, military, etc.)?

•**Probation Completed**: Has the worker completed at least 3 months of successful employment?

•**Social Agenda**: Does the position include planned social contact away from work?(after work get-to-gethers, company parties, etc.)

•**Trained Supervisor**: Is supervisor trained to work with the worker with a disability?

•**Uniform**: Does the position require a uniform or company ID to be worn?

•**Work Independence**: Does the employee work 80% or more of the time without direct supervision?

•**Working Conditions:** Are the conditions safe with adequate ventilation, special equipment, lighting, etc.?

•**Written Company Commitment**: Is there a written company statement describing PERMANENT job opportunities and affirmative hiring practices for workers with disabilities?

Date _____ Student _____

Index of Advancement

	Performance Review %	Expected Wage After 1 year (÷4.90)	Supervisor Responsibility %	Wage Responsibility	Work Independence	Inhouse Training	PASS/IRVE (For SSI Recipients Only)	Post Secondary Training (For HS Graduates Only)	Written Company Commitment	Certified/Licenced	Total Score for Advancement Index
Value Score					Y 1	1	1	1	1	1	Total ÷ =index
					N 0	0	0	0	0	0	

Index of Satisfaction

	Benefits	Performance Review %	Wage Level (÷ $3.35)	Hours (÷30)	Uniform	Social Agenda	Interest Area	Inhouse Training	Working conditions	Transportation	↳ Cost 1 or 0	↳ Convenience 1 or 0	↳ Accessibility 1 or 0	↳ Reliability 1 or 0	Total (÷4)	Total Score for Satisfaction Index
value score					Y 1	1	1	1	1							Total ÷ =index
					N 0	0	0	0	0							

Index of Security

	Benefits	Performance Review %	Hours (÷30)	Supervisor Responsibility (%)	Work Independence	Trained Supervisors	PASS/IRVE (For SSI Recipients Only)	Post Secondary Training (For HS Graduates Only)	Probation Completed	Written Company Commitment	Certified/Licenced	Transportation	↳ Cost 1 or 0	↳ Convenience 1 or 0	↳ Accessibility 1 or 0	↳ Reliability 1 or 0	Total (÷4)	Total Score for Security Index
value score					Y 1	1	1	1	1	1	1							Total ÷ =index
					N 0	0	0	0	0	0	0							

Index of Employment

Age-Appropriateness: Students enrolled in work experience in the final school year (grade 12) should be working in a less restrictive setting than students with three or four years remaining (grade 9 or 10). Determine the grade level of ungraded students by the number of years remaining. It is appropriate for students in their final year of school to be employed at minimum wage or better in Supported or Competitive employment, while a 9th grader working in an unpaid school position may be employed in an equally appropriate position. An earnings score is derived by dividing the appropriate grade level by the actual grade level. For example, a 12th grader in an unpaid school job would receive the following earnings score: 9 (appropriate grade) ÷ 12 (actual grade)=9÷12=.75. Graduates should be treated as 12th graders.

Integration: The integration score is listed for these placements regardless of age or years remaining, ranging from .2 for unpaid school training to 1.0 for paid community employment. Circle the correct score. The definitions distinguish placements and list the appropriate grade level and integration value for each type. The eight work experience and integration levels cover a broad range of placements currently available in school systems across the country.

- **Unpaid School**-Work experience in a school for training or credit only.
- **Unpaid Community**-Work experience in local businesses for training or credit only.
- **Subminimum School**-Paid work through a special worker certificate within the schools as part of a work experience program ≤ minimum wage.
- **Special Vocational Education**-A course for special needs students leading to entry level job competence.
- **Community Training**-Work experience paid by a business or agency which will not be available following graduation or school exit.
- **Competitive Employment**-Placement in a community job which is likely to continue following school exit.
- **Supported Employment (SE)**-Paid community employment for workers who are unable to compete with nondisabled workers without ongoing supports. For these disabled workers, SE is equivalent to competitive employment, hence the 1.0 value. The job must be likely to continue.
- **Supported Employment at sub-minimum wage** - Approriate for grade 11.
- **Supported Employment at $3.35/hour or above** - appropriate for seniors & graduates.

The following integration levels distinguish the work environments by weighted values:

- **Segregated**-Work occurs with predominantly disabled workers in a facility for disabled.
- **Mobile Crew**-Work occurs with predominantly disabled workers in community settings.
- **Enclave**-Work occurs in an integrated facility with no more than 8 disabled workers clustered together and supervised in a single work area.
- **Distributed**-Work occurs in an integrated setting where the disabled worker has 1:1 support from a job coach and guaranteed performance. The job coach is faded over time as worker competencies increase.
- **Trained Supervisors**-Work occurs in an integrated community setting and a company supervisor is trained to accomodate the worker's disability.
- **Followup/Independent**-Work occurs in an integrated community setting and the worker requires only periodic followup to maintain proficiency on the job.

Interaction & Social Condition scores are self-explanatory.

- **Expected Wage**: Divide the employee's expected (after 1 yr.) wage by $4.90 (poverty threshold) to derive an expected wage score.
- **Hours**: Divide employee's hours per week by 30 to derive score. (30 hours worked ÷ 30 = 1; 10 hours worked÷30=.33; 40 hours worked ÷ 30 =1.33)

Index of IEP Planning

For high school students only. Answer 1 or 0 for each item which can be verified from the IEP.

INDEX OF EMPLOYMENT

INTEGRATION + **Social** **EARNINGS** = **INDEX OF EMPLOYMENT**

Placement + Integration + Conditions + Interaction + Hours + Age-Appropriateness + Wages + Wages = EMPLOYMENT

Placement							Integration						Conditions		Interaction				Hours	Age-Appropriateness		Wages	Wages	
Unpaid School	Unpaid Community	Subminimum School	Special Vocation Education	CommunityTraining	Supported Subminimum	Supported ($3.35+)	Competitive Jobs	Segregated	Mobile Crew	Enclave	Distributive Job Coach	Job Coach + Trained Supv	Followup/Independent	Works with others	Breaktime: No interaction	Only with disabled	Infrequently w/ Nondisabled	Regularly w/ nondisabled	Hours ÷ 30	Unpaid School 9 Unpaid Community 10 Subminimum School 10 Special Voc Education 10 CommunityTraining 11 Supported Subminimum 11 Supported ($3.35+) 12 Competitive Jobs 12 Determine Age-Appropriateness: .75 ← Grade Appropriateness / Actual Grade → 1.33		Wage level ÷ $3.35	Expected Wage After 1 yr. (÷ $4.90)	INDEX OF EMPLOYMENT TOTAL ÷ # = INDEX
.2	.5	.4	.6	.7	1.0			.0	.2	.5	.8	.9	1.0	yes 1 no 0	.0	.2	.4	1.0		SCORE:				

Index of Long Range IEP Planning

	1. Assessments used to develop objectives?	2. Planning includes current vocational assessment data?	3. Planning includes long-range Career Goal?	4. Least restrictive environment considered for each objective?	5. Planning includes nonacademic goals?	6. Annual objectives relate to long range goals?	7. Planning includes life skill goals?	8. Planning includes social-behavior goals?	9. Timelines specified for annual/short term objectives?	10. Adult services rep present at planning meeting?	Total Score for Long Range Planning (Total ÷ 10)
Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Student _____ Date _____

These continuums are available to provide easy reference for each value. Plot each value on the appropriate continuum.

Most Restrictive Placement	Least Restrictive Placement

Index of Advancement	
Index of Satisfaction	
Index of Security	
Index of Employment	
Index of Planning	
Total Score	
Total score ÷ 5 = Index of Least Restrictive Employment	

Advancement

.25 .5 .75 1.0 1.5

Satisfaction

.25 .5 .75 1.0 1.5

Security

.25 .5 .75 1.0 1.5

Employment

.25 .5 .75 1.0 1.5

Index of Least Restrictive Planning

.25 .5 .75 1.0 1.5

Index of Least Restrictive Employment

.25 .5 .75 1.0 1.5

Index of Least Restrictive Employment Questionairre

Please take the time to complete the following questionairre. Your responses will be used to modify and improve the instrument before the final draft. Thank you.

1. How long did it take you to administer? _____ (minutes)

2. What populations were most appropriate for this instrument? Check all that apply.

_____ Multihandicapped	_____ Orthopedically Handicapped
_____ Visually Impaired	_____ Speech Impaired
_____ Learning Disabled	_____ Emotionally Disturbed
_____ Mentally Retarded	_____ Hearing Impaired
_____ Deaf-Blind	_____ Other Health Impaired

Other (please specify) _____

3. What populations were least appropriate for the instrument? Check all that apply.

_____ Multihandicapped	_____ Orthopedically Handicapped
_____ Visually Impaired	_____ Speech Impaired
_____ Learning Disabled	_____ Emotionally Disturbed
_____ Mentally Retarded	_____ Hearing Impaired
_____ Deaf-Blind	_____ Other Health Impaired

Other (please specify) _____

4. To what degree did the Index help you to make program decisions for students?

no help at all				very helpful
1	2	3	4	5

5. To what degree did the Index help you to evaluate individual student progress?

no help at all				very helpful
1	2	3	4	5

6. To what degree did the Index help you to evaluate the effectiveness of your Special Vocational Program?

no help at all				very helpful
1	2	3	4	5

7. Were the instructions easy to follow? Yes No

Comment_____

8. Were the definitions meaningful? Yes No Appropriate? Yes No

Comment_____

9. Were the weighted values appropriate? Yes No

Comment_____

10. Do Employment Index categories correspond to placement options in your program?

Yes No

Comment_____

_____

GREAT FALLS TRANSITION PROJECT
2100 16TH AVENUE SOUTH
GREAT FALLS, MT 59405